IN THE CLAIMS

This listing of claims replaces all prior listings:

1. (Currently Amended) An information processing system comprising:

a first information processing apparatus;

a plurality of second information processing apparatuses, each installed in one of a plurality of areas and configured for authenticating the first information processing apparatus located in one of the plurality of areas which corresponds to the area of the authenticating second information processing apparatus; and

a third information processing apparatus for providing content to the first information processing apparatus, the third information processing apparatus located in an area distinct from the plurality of areas,

wherein,

the first information processing apparatus, the plurality of second information processing apparatuses, and the third information processing apparatus being interconnected via a network,

the first information processing apparatus sends authentication information for authenticating a user, the authentication information is based on authentication screen information received from the third information processing apparatus, and information about the location area of first information processing apparatus to the third information processing apparatus via the network without involving the corresponding second information processing apparatus,

the third information processing apparatus sends the authentication screen information to the first information processing apparatus without involving the corresponding second information processing apparatus, determines whether the authentication information received from first information processing apparatus satisfies a predetermined input format, and based on a satisfactory determination selects one of the plurality of second information processing apparatuses which is located in the same area as that of the first information processing apparatus and sends the authentication information obtained from the first information processing apparatus to the selected second information processing apparatus via the network, and based on a non-satisfactory determination resends the authentication screen information to the first information processing apparatus,

the selected second information processing apparatus authenticates the first information processing apparatus on the basis of the authentication information received from the third information processing apparatus and sends authentication result information for the first information processing apparatus to the third information processing apparatus via the network.

2. (Previously Presented) The information processing system according to claim 1, wherein, if the third information processing apparatus determines that the authentication for the first information processing apparatus is permitted by the selected second information processing apparatus on the basis of the authentication result information supplied from the selected second information processing apparatus, the third information processing apparatus receives user information for the first information processing apparatus from the selected second information processing apparatus via the network.

3. (Previously Presented) The information processing system according to claim 1, wherein the third information processing apparatus transfers each piece of information with the selected second information processing apparatus in each area by use of a common library.

4. (Previously Presented) The information processing system according to claim 1, wherein the selected second information processing apparatus transfers each piece of information with the third information processing apparatus by use of a common interface in each area.

5. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

an acquiring unit for acquiring authentication information for authenticating a user of first another information processing apparatus and area information from the first another information processing apparatus;

a determination unit for determining whether the authentication information entered based on authentication screen information and received from the first another information processing apparatus satisfies a predetermined input format;

a selecting unit for selecting one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses corresponding to the area information acquired by the acquiring unit, the plurality of second another information processing apparatuses are each installed in one of a plurality of

areas, the selected another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus;

a sending unit for sending, via a network, the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus and the authentication information of the first another information processing apparatus acquired by the acquiring unit to the selected second another information processing apparatus selected by the selecting unit in the case of a satisfactory determination, and for resending in the case of a non-satisfactory determination the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus; and

a receiving unit for receiving, via the network, authentication result information for the first another information processing apparatus from the selected second another information processing apparatus,

wherein,

the information processing apparatus is located in an another area distinct from that of the first another information processing apparatus and the selected second another information processing apparatus, and

the authentication information is acquired from the first another information processing apparatus without involving the second another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus.

6. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, further comprising:

a determining unit for determining whether or not authentication for the first another information processing apparatus has been permitted by the selected second another information processing apparatus on the basis of the authentication result information received by the receiving unit,

wherein,

if the authentication for the first another information processing apparatus is determined by the determining unit to be permitted by the selected second another information processing apparatus, the receiving unit receives user information corresponding to the first another

information processing apparatus from the selected second another information processing apparatus via the network.

7. (Original) The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the area information is a language code and a country code.

8. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 5, wherein the sending unit and the receiving unit are each configured by a library common to the selected second another information processing apparatus in each area.

9. (Currently Amended) An information processing method for an information processing apparatus for providing content, comprising the steps of:

acquiring authentication information for authenticating a user of first another information processing apparatus and area information from the first another information processing apparatus;

determining whether the authentication information entered based on authentication screen information and received from the first another information processing apparatus satisfies a predetermined input format;

selecting one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses based on the area information acquired by the acquiring step, the plurality of second another information processing apparatuses are each installed in one of a plurality of areas, the selected another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus;

sending, via a network, the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus and the authentication information of the first another information processing apparatus acquired by the acquiring step to the selected second another information processing apparatus selected by the selecting step in the case of a satisfactory determination, and for resending in the case of a non-satisfactory determination the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus; and

receiving, via the network, authentication result information for the first another information processing apparatus from the selected second another information processing apparatus,

wherein,

the information processing apparatus is located in an another area distinct from that of the first another information processing apparatus and the selected second another information processing apparatus, and

the authentication information is acquired from the first another information processing apparatus without involving the second another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus.

10. – 13. (Cancelled)

14. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

a memory area control unit for controlling the creation of a memory area corresponding to first another information processing apparatus connected to the information processing apparatus via a network, the memory area being accessed via the network;

a storage unit for receiving a content ID from the first another information processing apparatus via the network and storing the content ID into the memory area whose creation has been controlled by the memory area control unit;

an authentication unit for authenticating the first another information processing apparatus based on the content ID entered in a input format based on received authentication screen information;

an issuing unit for issuing a memory area ID of the memory area in which the content ID is stored and authentication permission information indicative of the authentication of the first another information processing apparatus;

a selecting unit for selecting one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses on the basis of area information of the first another information processing apparatus, the plurality of second another information processing apparatuses are each installed

in one of a plurality of areas, the selected another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus; and

a sending unit for sending, via the network, the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus, the memory area ID and the authentication permission information issued by the issuing unit to the first another information processing apparatus along with URL information of the selected second another information processing apparatus selected by the selecting unit step in the case of a satisfactory authentication permission information, and for resending in the case of a non-satisfactory authentication permission information the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus,

wherein,

the selected second another information processing apparatus is interconnected to the information processing apparatus and the first another information processing apparatus via the network, ~~and~~

the information processing apparatus is located in an another area distinct from that of the first another information processing apparatus and the selected second another information processing apparatus, and

the content ID is received from the first another information processing apparatus without involving the selected second another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus.

15. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein,

in response to a request for information of the memory area corresponding to the memory area ID received from the selected second another information processing apparatus, the sending unit sends the content ID from the memory area to the selected second another information processing apparatus via the network;

in response to a request for content information corresponding to the content ID received from the selected second another information processing apparatus, the sending unit sends the

content information to the selected second another information processing apparatus via the network; and

in response to the request for content corresponding to the content ID received from the selected second another information processing apparatus, the sending unit sends the content to the second another information processing apparatus via the network.

16. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein the sending unit is configured by an interface common to the selected second another information processing apparatus in each area.

17. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 14, wherein, if the content ID received from the first another information processing apparatus has not been stored in the memory area by the storage unit or if the deletion of the memory area corresponding to the memory ID has been requested by the selected second another information processing apparatus, the memory area control unit controls the deletion of the memory area corresponding to the first another information processing apparatus.

18. (Currently Amended) An information processing method comprising the steps of:

controlling the creation of a memory area in a first information processing apparatus corresponding to first another information processing apparatus accessed via a network;

receiving a content ID from the first another information processing apparatus and storing the content ID into the memory area whose creation has been controlled by the memory area control step;

authenticating the first another information processing apparatus based on the content ID entered based on an authentication screen information in a predetermined input format;

issuing a memory area ID of the memory area in which the content ID sent from the first another information processing apparatus is stored and authentication permission information indicative of the authentication of the first another information processing apparatus;

selecting one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses corresponding to the first another information processing apparatus on the basis of area

information of the first another information processing apparatus, the plurality of second another information processing apparatuses are each installed in one of a plurality of areas, the selected second another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus; and

sending, via the network, the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus, the memory area ID and the authentication permission information issued by the issuing step to the first another information processing apparatus along with URL information of the selected second another information processing apparatus selected by the selecting step in the case of a satisfactory authentication permission information, and for resending in the case of a non-satisfactory authentication permission information the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus,

wherein,

the information processing apparatus is located in an another area distinct from that of the first another information processing apparatus and the selected second another information processing apparatus, and

the content ID is received from the first another information processing apparatus without involving the second another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus.

19. (Currently Amended) An information processing apparatus comprising:

a receiving unit for receiving, from first another information processing apparatus, via a network, a memory area ID corresponding to the first another information processing apparatus in one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses and authentication permission information indicative of being authenticated by the one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses, the plurality of second another information processing apparatuses are each installed in one of a plurality of areas, the one of a plurality of second another information processing apparatuses being selected on the basis of area information of the first another information processing apparatus, the selected another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus;

an acquiring unit for acquiring, on the basis of the memory area ID and the authentication permission information received by the receiving unit, a content ID stored in a memory area corresponding to the memory area ID and content information corresponding to the content ID from the selected second another information processing apparatus via the network; and

a sending unit for sending the content information acquired by the acquiring unit to the first another information processing apparatus in the case of a satisfactory authentication permission information of the content ID entered in a predetermined input format based on an authentication screen information received by the first another information processing apparatus, and resending the authentication screen information to the first another information processing apparatus in the case of a non-satisfactory authentication permission information.

wherein,

the information processing apparatus is located in an another area distinct from that of the first another information processing apparatus and the selected second another information processing apparatus, and

the content ID is received from the first another information processing apparatus without involving the second another information processing apparatus located in the same area as that of the first another information processing apparatus.

20. (Previously Presented) The information processing apparatus according to claim 19, further comprising:

a determining unit for determining, when the receiving unit has received an instruction for purchasing a sale service of the content ID from the first another information processing apparatus, whether or not the instruction for purchasing the sale service corresponding to the content ID has been received by the receiving unit,

wherein,

if the instruction for purchasing the sale service corresponding to the content ID is found received by the determining unit, the acquiring unit acquires the content corresponding to the content ID from the selected second another information processing apparatus via the network.